

## Message Text

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ORIGIN EB-03

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /004 R

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DRAFTED BY: EB/IFD/OMA:BGCROWE

APPROVED BY: EB/IFD/OMA:RJRYAN

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R 102151Z DEC 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 301017

LIMDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT KINSHASA 9420 SENT ACTION SECSTATE 10 NOV 76

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 9420

LIMDIS

FOR AF/C

E.O. 11652: GDS 12/31/82

TAGS: ETEL, CG

SUBJECT: MOBUTU AGREES TO FRENCH GROUND STATION COMMUNICATIONS  
SYSTEM

REF: (A) STATE 269904; (B) STATE 081852; (C) STATE 036307;  
(D) KINSHASA 644

1. FRENCH EMBASSY SOURCES HAVE CONFIRMED THAT PRESIDENT MOBUTU  
SIGNED CONTRACT WITH CSF-THOMSON FOR THE ERECTION OF A  
COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM IN ZAIRE. ON OCTOBER 22, 1976, PRESIDENT  
MOBUTU STOPPED IN PARIS FOR TALKS WITH GISCARD D'ESTAING AND  
APPARENTLY SIGNED THE AGREEMENT DURING HIS VISIT TO THE ELYSEE.

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2. TOTAL COST OF THE PROJECT IS ESTIMATED IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

OF \$85 MILLION. THE FRENCH TREASURY WILL PROVIDE ABOUT \$12 MILLION IN A 20-YEAR LOAN AT 3.5 PER CENT INTEREST WITH A FOUR-YEAR GRACE PERIOD. FOR THE REST, THE BANK OF FRANCE, GUARANTEED BY COFACE, WILL PAY THE FRENCH SUPPLIER AND WILL IN TURN BE REIMBURSED BY THE GOZ OVER AN EIGHT-YEAR PERIOD.

3. REFTELS RECOUNT THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN ITT AND CSF-THOMSON FOR THIS AGREEMENT. APPARENTLY THE MORE EXPENSIVE FRENCH SYSTEM HAS WON, THANKS TO GENEROUS FRENCH FINANCING PROVIDED THE FIRM HEADED BY THE FRENCH PRESIDENT'S BROTHER.

4. AMBASSADOR AND DCM DISCUSSED SUBJECT WITH BOFOSSA AND SAMBWA SEPARATELY. THEY CONFIRMED THAT AGREEMENT HAS BEEN SIGNED. BOTH WERE FULLY AWARE OF (A) UNDESIRABILITY OF SIGNING FRENCH PROJECT, PARTICULARLY CONSIDERING GOZ'S ACUTE FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES, AND (B) RELATIVE MERITS OF ITT PROPOSAL OVER FRENCH. THEY HAVE BOTH INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD TRY TO FIND WAYS TO UNDO THIS CONTRACT (BOFOSSA AND SAMBWA'S COMMENTS MUST BE HELD CLOSELY).

5. AS DEPT IS AWARE, WE WERE SUCCESSFUL ON A PREVIOUS OCCASION IN BLOCKING THIS PROJECT. HOWEVER, IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT MOBUTU HAS ALREADY AGREED AND THAT FRENCH INTEREST AND SUPPORT FOR THIS PROJECT IS AT VERY HIGH LEVEL (GISCARD HAS TAKEN A PERSONAL INTEREST; HIS BROTHER IS PRESIDENT OF THE COMPANY; NEBOT, OF PARIS CLUB, CONDUCTED NEGOTIATIONS AND IS NOW MEMBER OF THAT COMPANY), WE BELIEVE THAT IT MAY BE NECESSARY FOR THE IMF TO WEIGH IN WITH THE GOZ/FRENCH AT THE RIGHT TIME IF THIS PROJECT IS TO BE BLOCKED. THIS UNDERLINES THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE ADOPTION OF THE CITIBANK PROPOSAL IN THE PRIVATE DEBT NEGOTIATIONS, SINCE THE IMF CONDITIONS ATTACHED THERETO WILL BE THE KIND OF HANDLE NEEDED TO DISCOURAGE NON-PRIORITY PROJECTS.

6. WE ARE CONSIDERING VARIOUS TACTICS DESIGNED TO STOP DOMSAT CONTRACT, AND WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S THOUGHTS IN THIS REGARD. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD WE MOVE PRECIPITOUSLY. CUTLER

UNQUOTE ROBINSON  
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